

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4368

C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 1053

FOR SEC VANCE AND ADMIN GILLIGAN FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: SPOP, EAID, GV
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL
PROBLEMS -- POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD
PRODUCTION

REF: STATE 107370

1. WHILE NOT OVERTLY PRO-NATALIST, GUINEA HAS REJECTED
NEED FOR POPULATION CONTROL AND GOG OFFICIALS SHY AWAY
FROM DISCUSSION OF ISSUE. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO PUBLICLY
ENUNCIATED GOG POLICY, THE LEADERSHIP APPARENTLY BELIEVES
THAT GUINEA IS UNDERPOPULATED (WITH ONE-HALF THE AREA
OF FRANCE IT HAS ONLY ONE-TENTH THE POPULATION) AND THAT
MORE CHILDREN MEAN VIGOROUS NEW GENERATION TO CARRY
DEVELOPMENT FORWARD. DRAIN OF EXILE IMMIGRATION, NOTABLY
INCLUDING YOUTH, HAS REINFORCED GOG VIEW. THIS ATTITUDE
HAS ROOTS BOTH IN GUINEA'S THIRD-WORLD RADICAL IDEOLOGY
(COLONIALISM AND NEO-COLONIALISM CAUSE UNDERDEVELOPMENT,
NOT OVERPOPULATION) AND PREVALENT MUSLIM TRADITION (HAVE
AS MANY SONS AS POSSIBLE). PHRASES "POPULATION
LIMITATION" OR EVEN "FAMILY PLANNING" ARE TABOO IN OFFICIAL
LEXICON.

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2. AT SAME TIME, GUINEA IS FOOD SHORT. POTENTIALLY A
RICH FOOD EXPORTER, HER PROMISE HAS BEEN STUNTED BY A
SERIES OF DISASTEROUS IDEOLOGICALLY-MOTIVATED ATTEMPTS
AT COLLECTIVIST, STATIST, AGRICULTURAL PROMOTION AND
STATE-SET LOW PRODUCTION PRICES OVER LAST TWO DECADES.
GUINEA HAS BEEN RECEIVING PL-480 ASSISTANCE FOR 15 YEARS

AND NOW, GIVEN DROUGHT, FAILURES OF POST-1975 SOCIALIST "BRIGADE" CONCEPT, AND CREEPING ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, IS STEADILY LOSING GROUND, DESPITE PROCLAIMED GOG INTENT TO GIVE AGRICULTURE NUMBER-ONE PRIORITY.

3. THIS SITUATION MOTIVATED GOG IN 1978 TO BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF ITS AGRICULTURAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES. CLEARLY, PRESIDENT TOURE, CURRENTLY IN MORE PRAGMATIC PHASE, IS CASTING AROUND FOR METHODS THAT WORK, THOUGH IDEOLOGICAL BLINDERS TEND TO KEEP HIM FROM RECOGNIZING WHAT IS WRONG WITH AGRICULTURAL BRIGADES. AS PRESIDENT HAS PUBLICLY INVITED CRITICISM (E.G., IN PREPARATION FOR SEPTEMBER'S PARTY CONGRESS) AND MAY POSSIBLY BE MORE FAVORABLY DISPOSED THAN BEFORE TO REFORM (OFTEN SUGGESTED BY FAO, IBRD, IMF, AND OTHER MAJOR AID DONORS), WE WILL ATTEMPT TO PURSUE THE ISSUE, ALTHOUGH GOG IS STILL A LONG WAY FROM MAKING CONNECTION BETWEEN POPULATION AND FOOD. I HAVE AT LEAST MADE A START IN A RECENT INCONCLUSIVE SESSION WITH SOCIAL AFFAIRS DOMAIN MINISTER SAIFOULAYE DIALLO. GENEROUS PL-480 SHIPMENTS THIS SPRING OFFER TIMELY PEGS FOR FURTHER DIALOGUE.

4. LAST YEAR VISITING UNFPA'S REGIONAL (DAKAR-BASED) COORDINATOR HASSE B. GAENGER THOUGHT HE DETECTED A REVISIONIST ANOMALY IN GUINEAN IDEOLOGICAL ANTIPATHY TOWARDS POPULATION CONTROL. MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS
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JEANNE MARTIN-CISSE WAS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT HIS PROPOSAL FOR A UN "CHILD SPACING" PROJECT. THE IDEA THAT SPACING CHILDBIRTHS ALLOWS WOMEN TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE AND HEALTHIER SEEMED COMPATIBLE WITH GOG DOCTRINE FOR IMPROVING WOMEN'S LOT AND, AS SUCH, OFFERED A BACK DOOR INTO FAMILY PLANNING. HOWEVER, GOG HAS NEVER ANSWERED UNDP'S FORMAL FOLLOW-UP LETTER AND NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE. FURTHER EFFORTS BY UNFPA TO INDUCE GOG TO RECONSIDER ITS VIEW ON FAMILY PLANNING ON HEALTH-SOCIAL GROUNDS OFFER ONE PROMISING COMPLEMENT TO ARGUMENTS BASED ON FOOD SUPPLY CONSIDERATIONS.

5. UNDP IS SEEKING TO MAKE ANOTHER INDIRECT BEGINNING VIA PROPOSED POPULATION CENSUS, WHICH UN WOULD FUND (1.13 MILLION U.S. DOLS) IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AT LEAST SOME STATISTICAL BASIS FOR FURTHER ACTION. PROJECT IS CURRENTLY STALLED BY GOG DEMANDS THAT A GUINEAN BE APPOINTED PROJECT DIRECTOR WITH INTERNATIONAL EXPERT STATUS AND THAT UN PAY ALL LOCAL (GUINEAN) SALARIES AS WELL AS OTHER EXPENSES OF CENSUS. NEGOTIATIONS MAY DRAG ON FOR SOME TIME. UNDP HAS ALSO TURNED OVER SANITARY-SEX EDUCATION FILMS, SLIDES, AND BROCHURES TO GOG BUT

DOES NOT KNOW HOW MUCH USE HAS BEEN MADE OF THEM.
CROSBY

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Message Attributes

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Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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